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郑元男◎著

**Relationship Among Leisure Flow,
Leisure Satisfaction and Happiness for Older
Adult Leisure Sports Participants in China**

中国老年人休闲体育参加者的
流畅、休闲满意度与幸福感关系研究



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Preface

This study measured the causal relationship among leisure flow, leisure satisfaction and happiness and explored whether leisure satisfaction performs somewhat like a mediating factor in the relationship between leisure flow and happiness, after comparing and analyzing differences in leisure flow, leisure satisfaction and happiness according to demographic sociological characteristics of Chinese elderly participants of leisure sports, and presented evidentiary materials for improving elderly people's quality of life and fostering their participation in leisure sports. This study selected a population of the elderly leisure sports participants over 60 years old who have been living in Beijing, Tianjin and Shenyang in China as of 2013, and then sampled 600 people by using convenience sampling method of non-probability sampling methods. The number of cases that were used in the final analysis except for data with insincere responses of questionnaires was 530 people. The frequency analysis, exploratory factor analysis, confirmatory factor analysis, reliability analysis, *t*-test, one-way ANOVA, correlation analysis and hierarchical multiple regression analysis were done by using SPSS version 18.0 for Windows and AMOS 7.0 program for the data processing. And the following conclusions were derived after the mediator effect of leisure satisfaction was analyzed through the Sobel test.

First, an analysis of differences in leisure flow according to demographic sociological factors shows that, female is higher than male in gender, adults over 75 are high in age, technical college graduates are high in educational level, 1 h is high in daily participation duration, everyday participation is high in weekly participation frequency, Yangge is high in participation activity and 1,000–2,000 RMB is high in monthly income.

Second, an analysis of differences in leisure satisfaction according to demographic sociological factors shows that, female is higher than male in gender, adults over 75 are high in age, technical college graduates are high in educational level, marriage and cohabiting are high in marital maintenance state, 1 h is high in daily participation duration, everyday participation is high in weekly participation frequency, Yangge and Taichi are high in participation activity and 4,001–5,000 RMB is high in monthly income.

Third, an analysis of differences in happiness according to demographic sociological factors shows that, female is higher than male in gender, the 70–74 age band is high in age, 1 h is high in daily participation duration, everyday participation is high in weekly participation frequency, Taichi is high in participation activity and 2,001–3,000 RMB is high in monthly income.

Fourth, leisure flow shows a positive effect on happiness.

Fifth, leisure flow shows a positive effect on leisure satisfaction.

Sixth, leisure satisfaction also shows statistically significant effect on happiness.

Finally, as a result of analyzing the mediating effect of leisure satisfaction between leisure flow and happiness of the elderly leisure sports participants, it shows that leisure satisfaction plays a role as a partial mediating factor between leisure flow and happiness.

As a final note, I would like to express my gratitude to all those who helped me during the writing of this book. My deepest gratitude goes first and foremost to Professor Youngshin Won, my supervisor, for her constant encouragement and guidance. She has walked me through all the stages of the writing of this book. Without her consistent and illuminating instruction, this book could not have reached its present form. And my thanks would go to my beloved family for their loving considerations and great confidence in me all through these years. I also owe my sincere gratitude to my friends and my wife who gave me their help and

time in listening to me and helping me work out my problems during the difficult course of the writing of the book.

Yuannan Zheng
Hangzhou, China
Dec. 2015

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Chapter

1

Introduction

The technological advance of modern society has led to the development of the medical industry, and the accompanying improvement in standards of living and overcoming of disease has extended the average length of life and also the aging phenomenon has been observed (Won, 2013). In a report of the UN Population Division (2010) on the changes in the world's population, they said that people aged 65 and over were globally 131 million in 1950, but reached 357 million in 1994 and 420 million in 2000. People aged 65 and over are estimated to be 1 billion in 2030, and this is equal to the pace of old population growth of 800,000 people in one month. Also, they defined an aging society as one in which more than 10 percent of the population are aged 60 and over, or more than 7 percent of the population are aged 65 and over.

China is one of the most populous countries in the world, with 1.37 billion people as of 2014 (National Bureau of Statistics of China, 2014). Further, by the accelerated aging phenomenon in the late 20th century, people aged 60 and over reached 7 percent of the population in 1999 already (Chen, 2007). Thus, China is

not only the most populated country in the world, but also the world's largest country by population of old people. "The 6th demographic statistics of China" in 2014 shows that the population aged 60 and over are 193 million and make about 14.3 percent of the total population, and the population aged 65 and over are 120 million (8.92 percent of the total population), so it shows that China is changing into an aging society. According to the forecast report of population aging development trend in China, the aged population of China will increase to 202 million in 2015 (15 percent), 310 million in 2025 (23 percent) and 337 million in 2040 which is equivalent to one-fourth of the total population, and China will have the highest proportion of old people in the world (China National Committee on Aging, 2014).

On the other hand, the rapid aging phenomenon, declining fertility, reduced mortality and long average life span on China are triggering further various social problems as well as the numerical meaning of their increasing scale and gravity (Zhang & Li, 2011). That is to say, the aging problem has been proposed as another social problem of China in the 21st century next to the problem of resources and environment, because when the elderly population increases, it leads to significant changes in the labor market and the economic structure by lower productivity and lack of human resources in production (Qu & Wang, 2011). The elderly demand interactions with other people and spiritual consolation because they have a lot of spare time and a relatively narrow living sphere in everyday life. For the elderly, good physiological function and maintenance are directly related to successful aging. Therefore, it is very important to live a life strenuously and positively through active participation in society and vigorous physical activity (Rowe & Kahn, 1987). Such views represent that the in-depth understanding for a happy life and successful aging of the elderly in China is necessary.

Something to notice in China's population aging is the leisure sports participation of the elderly people aged 65 and over is high (Xu, 2011). China has already entered an aging society and shows a high interest in the quality of life and happiness of the elderly (Chen, 2011; Wang, 2008). The previous studies are strongly associated with the psychological well-being, leisure satisfaction, happiness or physical health of the elderly participants in leisure activities (Ahn,

2008; Kim, 2012; Shin, 2010), and in particular, they place a high value on leisure participation based on physical activity (Bae, 2009; Bath & Morgan, 1998; Dipietro, 2001; Menec, 2003). The participation experience of the elderly to leisure activities seems to have an important bearing on successful aging. In addition, leisure activities for the elderly in China act as an important factor about how they run their senescence life more satisfactory and happily.

The leisure activities which are being proposed as a way to improve the quality of life of the elderly are, the free participation experiences in recovery, mental rebirth, rest, self-realization, pursuing hobby/culture/art, entertainment and social activities on their own after the realization of obligations such as family, labor and one's responsibilities (Dumazedier, 1967a). The elderly gets help to promote physical and mental health, social network expansion, increasing motivation for life, establishment of identity, enjoyment and satisfaction by participating in these activities. Oldridge (1984) said that leisure activities of the elderly give pleasure, and a feeling of excitement and joy plays an important role in continuous running of physical activity, and Peppers (1973) and Decarlo (1974) said the more frequent participation in leisure activities or recreational activities, the greater life satisfaction would be given, insisting that there is a positive correlation between participation in leisure activity and life satisfaction. That is to say, the studies that reveal leisure activities are the factors to improve the quality of life of the elderly (Campbell et al., 1976; London et al., 1977; Regheb & Griffith, 1982) have been progressed variously. The participation of the elderly in leisure activities promotes higher immersion and plays an important role in contributing to self-respect, maintenance of self identity, leisure and life satisfaction and happiness (Lee, 2010).

Let's have a look at the relationship among variables about leisure flow, leisure satisfaction and happiness. Firstly, leisure flow means the state deeply sinking into something when people participate specific activities due to individual's intrinsic motivation (Csikzentmihalyi, 1975). Tinsley HE & Tinsley DJ (1986) insisted that the leisure experiences with high immersion level can meet various needs which cannot be met in other living areas, and Jung (1997) insisted that people participating in life sports as leisure activities feel positive emotion and experience in the sport itself when they are attracted to sports without any

compensation. Therefore, happiness or leisure satisfaction that the elderly are pursuing makes continuous participation by experiencing immersion from participation in leisure sports. In other words, this is a leisure flow that is closely related to the motive for participation which causes human behavior (Marlin & Hausenblaus, 1998). In this way, leisure flow is associated with satisfaction, health and happiness which are pursued by factors such as purposes, uncertainty and competitiveness for sports activities (Bunting et al., 2000; Hyeon, 2006; Kim & Lee, 2008; Lee & Hwang, 2008; Ma, 2001; McIntyre & Pigram, 1992; Vorderer et al., 2003). Leisure satisfaction means the degree of satisfaction or emotion and positive recognition that currently individuals form or obtain about the result of choice or experience for common leisure activities (Beard & Ragheb, 1980). So leisure satisfaction is a very important factor in connection with selection, participation and continuance of leisure sports. Researchers in the field of recreation and leisure inquired into many facts related to the concept of leisure satisfaction, the common concept presented in these studies is recognizing leisure satisfaction as the outcome of social friendship, interaction and interpersonal relationship desire that human must meet (London et al., 1977; Neulinger & Raps, 1972), and considering it as a factor that affects even physical, psychological, emotional, social and mental health. In the study on leisure participation and satisfaction of the elderly, Ragheb & Griffith (1982) said that a high level of changed leisure participation and satisfaction is positively related to life satisfaction.

Happiness is a life feeling such as life satisfaction and positive thinking which can be felt continuously in all areas of life and it refers to positive emotions that can be used synonymously with satisfaction, peace of mind and fullness (Park, 2003). Lyubomirsky (2001) said that genetic factors influence about 50 percent, environmental factors influence 10 percent of happiness and the rest 40 percent is due to intentional activities and the result of thought and action. In addition, Aristotle regarded happiness as the final objective that all other goals are looking for (Kim, 2007). The findings by many scholars have been demonstrated that participation in leisure activities has a positive effect on human happiness in the long term or the short term, and especially aerobic activities contribute to happiness by reducing tension and stress and increasing the vitality of life (Berger & Owen,

1988; Bahrke & Morgan, 1978; Berger, 1984; Martisen, 1990; Morgan & Goldton, 1987; Raglin & Morgan, 1987).

The domestic and international previous studies about the relationship with leisure flow, leisure satisfaction and happiness show that, firstly in the relationship between leisure flow and leisure satisfaction, the higher the leisure flow of the elderly participants in leisure activities is, the higher leisure satisfaction there is (Lee, 2010). In the study of the elderly participants in life-time sports by Kim et al. (2011), it appears that leisure flow promotes leisure satisfaction. Also the relationship between leisure flow and happiness shows it is well known that leisure flow is positively correlated with promotion of happiness (Hong, 2011b; Kim, 2011; Shin, 2010). According to the study of Lim and Lee (2010), which has found the relationship between leisure flow and happiness, it is showed that cognitive leisure flow has a positive effect on happiness. Finally, the relationship between leisure satisfaction and happiness shows that leisure satisfaction is good for happiness (Andrew & Gordon, 2009). Beard & Ragheb (1980) said that the high leisure satisfaction increases happiness and life satisfaction. Also in the study of Jin (2009) which is about leisure sports participants in China, it is said that leisure satisfaction increases happiness.

Studies on the current status of activity and measures of the elderly participants in leisure sports who reside in each area (Bian, 2011; Cheng, 2010; Mo, 2009) and studies on the elderly's sports culture and lifestyle (Li, 2011; Liang, 2008; Zhang, 2011) have so far been conducted in China as prior studies about the elderly's leisure sports. But, studies conducted by various leisure-related variables such as the elderly's leisure sports, quality of life, leisure satisfaction, leisure flow, subjective happiness, health behavior, serious leisure, successive aging and life satisfaction are insufficient. In addition, most of recent fields of sports studies are limited to the elderly in Japan, Korea and advanced nations of the West. However, the studies on leisure activities of the elderly in China which is the world's biggest country of the elderly (UN, 2012) are in an unsatisfactory condition. There is a need to figure out the status for leisure sports cases of the Chinese elderly by analyzing leisure flow, leisure satisfaction and happiness of the elderly participants in leisure sports. Leisure activities with the elderly are the ways of life with very important implications in real life, and furthermore, the government,

local communities, welfare facilities and general homes should have an interest in activities of the elderly for an activation of serious leisure activities. Therefore, in the sense that it provides an academic evidence to understand leisure sports culture of the Chinese elderly sharing oriental values and Confucian ideas with Koreans, the studies on participation process activities in leisure sports of the elderly are necessary.

1.1 Purpose of the Study

This study measured the causal relationship among leisure flow, leisure satisfaction and happiness and explored whether leisure satisfaction performs as a mediating factor in the relationship between leisure flow and happiness, after comparing and analyzing differences in leisure flow, leisure satisfaction and happiness according to social demographic characteristics of Chinese elderly participants of leisure sports, and presented evidentiary materials for improving elderly people's quality of life and fostering their participation in leisure sports.

1.2 Research Model and Hypotheses

1.2.1 Research Model

In the present study, leisure flow was set as the independent variable and happiness as the dependent variable. The demographic characteristics and leisure-related characteristics were set as background variables. The mediating variable that intervenes the relationship between independent and dependent variables was the leisure satisfaction and the hypothetical relationship model between the variables, as seen in Figure 1-1.

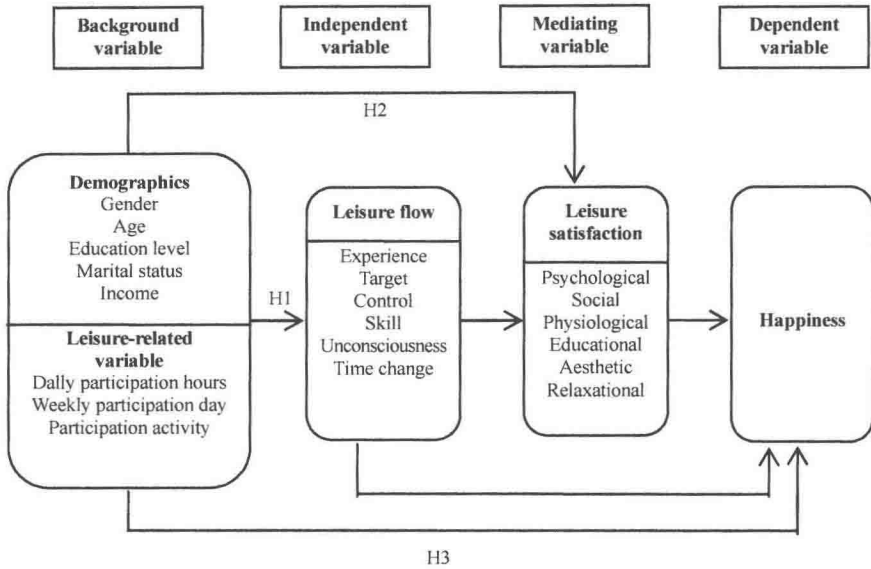


Figure 1-1 Research model

- H1: There will be a difference in leisure flow by background variables;
H2: There will be a difference in leisure satisfaction by background variables;
H3: There will be a difference in happiness by background variables.

1.2.2 Hypothesis Model

A hypothetical model, as shown in Figure 1-2, was set up in order to analyze the relationship among leisure flow, leisure satisfaction and happiness of the Chinese elderly who participate in leisure activities and to verify the causal relationships and mediating effects among variables.

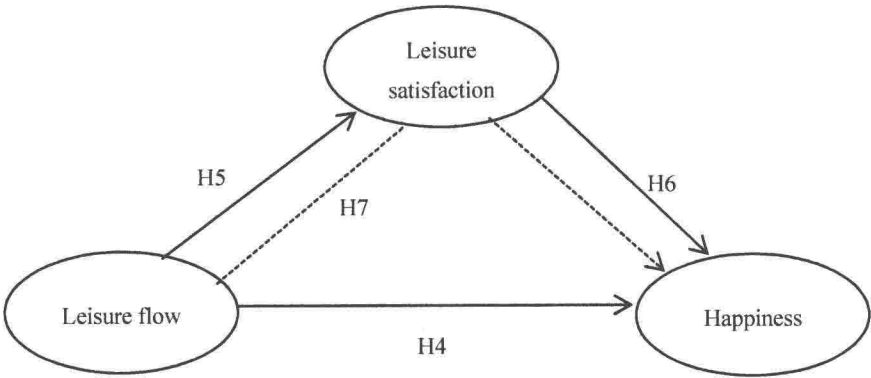


Figure 1-2 Hypothesis model

H4: Leisure flow will have a significantly positive relationship with happiness;
H5: Leisure flow will have a significantly positive relationship with leisure satisfaction;
H6: Leisure satisfaction will have a significantly positive relationship with happiness;
H7: Leisure satisfaction will mediate the relationship between leisure flow and happiness.

1.3 Limitations of the Study

This study has following limitations and thresholds due to the problems that appear in demographic characteristics, subjects of the study, measurement tools and causality settings.

First, as the problems associated with representative of sampling targets, limited understanding and analysis about generalization of the study results are required. The possibility of various errors cannot be ruled out to apply the findings to the whole population of the aged because the subjects in this study are limited to the elderly who live in Beijing, Tianjin and Shenyang in China.

Second, the relationship among leisure flow, leisure satisfaction and happiness of leisure sports participants could be affected by an extraneous variable outside the controlled demographic characteristics or potential variables that are not observed. This study set gender, age, educational level, household income and marital state as the factors associated with happiness. But also other variables such as physical environment, occupation and leisure resources can have significant correlation with happiness. Therefore, the possibility that happiness have been

affected by other factors outside framed variables cannot be ruled out.

Third, for setting the relationship model, it cannot be asserted that leisure flow and leisure satisfaction comprehensively accommodate the relationship with happiness.

1.4 Definition of Terms

The operational definitions for the terms which will be used in this study are as follows.

1.4.1 *The Chinese Elderly*

The criteria for the elderly of UN (2005) is “people aged 65 and over”, and this definition is most commonly used in administrative terms because it is a relatively reasonable reflection of physiological, physical, social and psychological characteristics of aging. However, currently China states people older than 60 as the elderly on the basis of Article 2 in the first chapter of “Law of the People’s Republic of China on the Protection of the Rights and Interests of the Elderly” (The Central People’s Government of the People’s Republic of China, 2015). The age when people are entitled to pensions is 60 for men and 55 for women, and the joining age for senior discount cards is defined as people over 60 for both men and women (China National Committee on Aging, 2013).

1.4.2 *Leisure Flow*

Leisure flow means the state deeply sinking into something when people participate specific activities due to individual’s intrinsic motivation (Csikzentmihalyi, 1975). In order to cause leisure flow, the tasks would be possible to challenge, and each step of the challenges should be presented distinctly (Lee, 2005). The leisure flow in this study is the experience and the feeling absorbed in the movement itself as the most pleasant and enjoyable moments which are gained when people participate in leisure sports. Clear objectives, experiences, control, skills, unconsciousness and transformation of time were set as lower factors.